

## Contributions

### UNIFORMITY

J. L. GILLIN

At times there is apparent a thought among our brethren that uniformity of practice in the observance of the ordinances is necessary, and that something should be done to bring such a state of affairs about. Such would certainly be a very desirable condition to see obtain any church.

But did our brethren who feel bad that such is not the case in our own church ever stop to think that it is such in but few organizations of any nature whatsoever? Did they ever ponder that reflection of Emperor, Charles the Fifth, when in his retirement and old age, he vainly tried to make two clocks run together. After many unsuccessful efforts he said, "How foolish I have been to think I could make all men believe alike about religion, when here I cannot make two clocks keep the same time." And yet the friends of uniformity of thought, habit, dress, custom and order of religious services sometimes grow pessimistic because there is variety among the churches on matters of personal taste, manner of conducting the ordinances, etc. Even divergence of thought concerning doctrines need alarm no one. Much better it would be perhaps if we all could see alike on the minor matters. Perhaps, there would be a great cordiality could we all be equally sound in judgment. But such human beings are not.

There are only two ways of securing uniformity. One is by force, the other by persuasion. The former will perhaps secure the greater apparent success, but smacks of ignorance and slavery. The minds of the many must be subservient to the judgment of the few. Thought must be confined within the narrow bounds laid down by those who control. Individual independence of thought cannot exist.

The latter seems uncertain and slow, but once obtained its results remain. It fosters the largest knowledge, and promotes the most candid independence and freedom of thought. The only unity demanded of Christians is unity of spirit. Eph. 4:3. Paul exhorts the Philippians to be "of one mind." But where does he threaten them with excommunication, if they are not. That condition is not obtainable by excommunication but by persuasion.

If the church in the past had recognized that great truth, how different had been her history! The inquisition had not been, the strife which rent the Dunkard church into three bodies had not arisen, and Christ's prayer yet to be answered, that the church might be one had not waited these weary centuries

## BRETHREN EVANGELIST

How necessary then that we Brethren should be wise. Uniformity, not of dress nor of externals merely, but of thought, of spirit, of aim and purpose shall yet be ours, if we follow the Master closely. But let it never come, rather than come without the intelligent consent of every member. Exhortation will do whatever is done.

### DILIGENCE

HENRY H. SCHULER

The diligent Christian is a person who looks upon time as the most invaluable of all treasures, and upon the salvation of his soul as the most interesting business of life. He assigns not the dregs of his time to the exercises of devotion, while the flower of it is dedicated unto the pursuit of worldly employments, but he serves God with the best he can afford. He does not say unto the duties of religion as the partial Christians of the apostle James said to the poor man in vile raiment when he came into their assembly, stand ye there or sit here under my footstool, while the duties of his civil calling are invited with the man that wears the gold ring and gay clothing to sit in a good place. He seeks first the kingdom of God and his righteousness and other things can only claim a secondary care.

Like Solomon, he first builds the house of God and then his own house. As the shekel of the sanctuary was double to the common shekel, so in matters of eternity he doubles the diligence that he uses in the matters of time. Religion is not his by-work, nor a matter of mere amusement which he may or may not attend unto as he pleases. He knows my salvation worthy of so much blood, and shall I think it worthy of no more but a few languid endeavors, slothful wishes, lazy desires? He looks upon no time as incapable of religious improvement. Even the seasons of worldly avocations are sometimes blessed seasons of intercourse with heaven. As the image of Caesar was instamped upon the smallest coin as well as the greatest, so the beauty of the Lord his God is stamped upon the minutest actions of his life and establishes every work of his hand. Holiness, like a beautiful and shining varnish spread over the colorings of a picture imparts a heavenly lustre to his whole conversation. Instead of contriving excuses to blunt the edge of the precept and still the clamours of his own conscience when called to any necessary duty, he opens his mouth and he has as well as what he has not and his good is not in his hand, he enjoys the gifts of providence by moderately using them to the glory of his Creator and the good of his fellow creature. He steers the middle course between the sordid miser who lays up his talent in a napkin, and the

prodigal waster who consumes upon his lusts what was given him for more noble ends. He thankfully receives but does not anxiously pursue the goods of fortune nor abandon himself to unmanly grief when they make unto themselves wings and fly away. The world is dead to him what thou bury it out of his sight. He reverences himself and highly disdains to place his happiness in what was only designed for his temporary accommodation. Mindful of his high original he suffers not this servant to bear rule which were to submit to a slavery of all other slavery the most inglorious whilst he converses much with things eternal and unseen he acquires a high disdain of the temporal things that are seen, as he who deals much in pieces of gold thinks little of copper money.

The good of the heavenly country is before him, even the better and enduring substance, and like the venerable patriarch he regards not his stuff of worldly enjoyments if he is called to forego them. He rejoices more that his friends are holy than that they are wealthy, and is more anxious to instill into the minds of his children sentiments of devotion than to bring them acquainted with the art of making their fortune and growing considerable in the world. He uses the world as a flower which preserves its beauty and verdure the longer the less you handle it.

When the busy worldling at once throws up his interest in the comforts of time and pleasures of eternity this heaven-born soul has the true relish of life and at the same time can rejoice in all the treasures of eternity as his own proper mercies. Happy soul, he has provided for himself bags that wax not old, and durable riches which no rust can corrupt no thief can steal, of which no storm, no conflagration can bereave him.

### SOLACE IN WORK

C. H. WETHERBE

In times of discouragement the Christian may get solace by putting his heart into some kind of good work. Dr. Edward Judson says that it is evident that Christ was under discouragement at the time when he prayed using, in part, these words: "I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent and hast revealed them unto babes." He says that the original text means a confession of failure on Christ's part; and then Dr. Judson says that Christ found solace in Christian work. I quote from him: "After this full confession of failure he says, 'Come unto me. You have not come, but still I issue the gracious invitation. Only a few babes have come; still, come unto me all ye that labor.' He does not turn away embittered and